

PETITION
OF
H. C. INGERSOLL

PRAYING

That the right of suffrage be granted to women in the District of Columbia.

FEBRUARY 10, 1870.—Referred to the Committee on the District of Columbia and ordered to be printed.

To the honorable Senate and House of Representatives in Congress assembled:

The undersigned respectfully represent that, after the many able arguments made, both in England and this country, in behalf of woman's political rights, it is generally acknowledged that there is some justice in her plea to be represented when she pays taxes; and also to have some voice in making the laws by which she is governed. It may be taken for granted that this Congress believes many women able to vote intelligently, and to be as deeply interested in the preservation and welfare of the country as themselves. We ask that they will do justice to this faith within them, by giving suffrage to such women of the District of Columbia as may reasonably be expected to represent the true interests of their sex, and at the same time aid in preserving the true interests of the state. We do not ask that they allow ignorant women to vote, for we would not have ignorant men vote, if their votes were not demanded for the preservation of their lives and liberties. No such demand is made for woman's vote at this time. We do not ask that woman should determine questions of peace or war, as man does, by his vote, for he has his strong right arm to fight for the government he makes, while she is only able to fight by means of her ability to provide a substitute in case of war. We do not ask that women who have been convicted of crime, or pursue an unlawful vocation as a means of living, should have the franchise; but that the acknowledged influence and rights of women in the political sphere shall have a *basis in law*, so that no woman need feel that she is out of her place in loving her country, and thinking, speaking, or writing of its welfare; and in order that woman's interests may be more fully represented, and that the country may have the advantage of her intelligence and morality in legislation, we ask that the suffrage be given to those women of the District of Columbia who can read and write intelligently; who are possessed of property enough to provide a substitute in war; have never been convicted of crime, and pursue no unlawful vocation as a means of living.

That the above qualifications, if applied to men who have been in the habit of voting, might be difficult to determine, we acknowledge; but

we propose for women a simple and practicable method of selection. Let every woman of the District of Columbia vote who will go before the mayor of this city and take oath that she can fulfill the above conditions. The general probity of the sex, and fear of the penalties for perjury, would make this rule a safe rule. There seems to be an especial propriety in admitting an intelligent vote from the women of this District at this time. The chairman of the District Committee has said that improved legislation for the District was probably desired by a majority of the *intelligence* in it, while he feared that a majority *vote* could not be obtained for such. In this condition of things what better measure could be taken than to increase the intelligent vote by giving the suffrage to its intelligent women? This Congress is perfectly free to act upon its own independent convictions in this matter. There is no power above or beneath to hinder it from doing *right* on this question. And should this honorable body permit this qualified vote of the women of this District, it would give a great educational stimulus to all the women of this country. They would feel that the franchise was attainable by them whenever they chose to put forth exertion for that end. All the women of the civilized world would feel elevated and represented by this movement. The sense of "subjection" as a class, now so bitter to many women, would pass away and a new era dawn for them.

Should it be feared that womanly grace and refinement would be injured by her going to the polls, let it be remembered that in this District many women, to pay their taxes, are obliged to encounter a crowd as dense and as variously colored as it ever can be on election day. The taxes being received here at hours when many men of the District are in the departments, many of their wives in doing this business, and in order to help their husbands, are initiated to a scene quite as annoying as they can be in the day when they go to the polls to help, not their husbands only, but the whole beloved country.

H. C. INGERSOLL, AND OTHERS.

WASHINGTON, February 8, 1870.

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Singer Souvenirs

of New York City
Up Town

AFFIX
ONE CENT
POSTAGE



Herald
Square

Broadway

34th St.
and
Sixth Ave

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